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ABSTRACT

A project completed the final draft of a script for a video that would present the realities of teen parenthood. The video was intended to show the social and economic problems teen parents encounter, the potential problems single parents must face, and the expectations of parenthood. Steps in the writing process included the following: interviews with girls in the Single Teen Parent project; writing of preliminary drafts; discussion of the drafts with teens, teen parents, and counselors; and completion of a final draft ready for production. (The video script is attached to the three-page report. It is designed to depict a realistic situation about teenage pregnancy that will provoke thought among teenagers.) (YLB)

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FINAL REPORT

Single Teen Parent/Homemaker

"Days of Future Past"

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Project Director

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July 15, 1989

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RATIONALE:

The problem of teen pregnancy directly effects thousands of young girls and boys each year as well as their families, peers, and communities. The intent of this project was to present the realities of teen parenthood.

OBJECTIVES:

The prime objective of this video script is to reduce the number of teen pregnancies by:

-showing the social and economic problems teen parents encounter

-showing the potential problems single parents must face

-discussing the expectations of parenthood and examining the realities of parenthood.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

During the final quarter of this year the video script was completed. The actual interviewing and writing process took longer than initially anticipated which rushed the evaluation process. We were able to discuss preliminary drafts of the script with teens, teen parents, and counselors. Reaction to the script prompted discussion of the problem rather than the intended evaluative comments.

Single Teen Parent project directors were very helpful in providing input and in opening their classrooms to us. The girls we interviewed were very willing to discuss and share their preconceived ideas as well as the problems they face. Many of the problems were shared by all to some extent. These common problems provided the foundation of the video script.

PLANS:

The final draft is now complete and ready for production. All evaluation copies have not been returned. The evaluations received prior to June 30, 1989 were all positive and suggestions offered were carefully considered and changes were made. If evaluations should be returned after the final script has been submitted and suggestions for changes in content are necessary, revisions will be made and submitted.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We hope that this video script will be produced in the near future. We would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the production process if funding should become available.

When the video is produced, I might also suggest that information concerning programs available to teen parents accompany accompany the script. The video intentionally presents the negative realities of teen parenting. Having resource material available to viewers who are already parents can provide hope.

MOONFLOWER

A Screenplay

by

Steve Cleberg

Prepared for

Days of Future Past

Teen Parenting Program

Funded by

Department of Vocational Education

Somerset Community College

The screen is dark.

The numerals "1980" fade into the darkness to indicate the year in which the following scene is to take place.

The numerals dissolve and the title, "The Hidden Camera," is the image which appears over the studio stage and a studio audience. An older, casual looking man and an attractive younger woman are sitting on the stage as the announcer introduces the program.

VOICE OVER

Hello, everybody. It's time once again to bring you, "Hidden Camera." Here's our chance to bring you the people of Kentucky at their most natural. And now here's the star of "Hidden Camera," Allen Lunt!

The applause swells.

The title dissolves.

Close-up on Allen.

ALLEN

Hello, folks and welcome once again to "Hidden Camera." With me today is our lovely co-hostess, Jean Ann Plug.

The applause swells.

Close-up on Jean Ann.

Close-up on Allen.

ALLEN

To open our show, we took our cameras to Lincoln Public Grade School right here in Lexington to visit with a group of six year olds in Mrs. Johnson's first grade class. We were trying to discover what the hopes and dreams of these youngsters were. They're our future folks. Come along with us and I think you'll find what they had to say is quite interesting.

The shot cuts to Hope at the age of six. She is sitting at a table in an empty classroom. We can hear Allen speaking to Hope but we cannot see him. The shots of Hope move from close-up to medium shots in the appropriate manner. The flashbacks, which are repeated, should be presented identically.

ALLEN

You're a very pretty girl, did you know that?

Hope puts her hands over her face in embarrassment.

ALLEN

Are you embarrassed?

Hope nods her head without taking her hands away from her face.

ALLEN

Why are you embarrassed? Don't you think you're pretty?

Hope shakes her head without taking her hands away from her face.

ALLEN

I sure think you're pretty. If you take your hands down I'll try not to embarrass you any more.

Hope takes her hands away from her face but she still has an embarrassed expression on her face.

ALLEN

Tell me, honey. What's your name?

HOPE

Hope.

ALLEN

What's that, honey?

HOPE

I said Hope!

ALLEN

Oh, you said Hope!

The screen dissolves into dark once again. The numerals 1990 fade into the darkness to indicate the year in which the following scene is to take place.

The numerals fade into the image of Hope at the age of sixteen, lying in a hospital bed. She has just delivered a baby. She is asleep. A soap opera which is playing on the television can be heard in the background.

Close-up on Hope.

NURSE'S VOICE

Hope? Hope?

Hope wakes up.

Close-up on the nurse. She is holding Hope's baby.

NURSE

It's time to feed your baby.

Hope sits up. The nurse gives the baby to Hope and helps her to prepare to feed the baby with a bottle.

A young girl by the name of Marty is lying in the bed next to Hope. She is two years older than Hope and not quite as pretty. She is watching the soap opera which is playing on the television.

The camera shots will move from the scene occurring in the soap opera to each of the girls for reaction shots.

Hope's reactions to the scene in the soap opera are romantically naive. Marty's reactions are more cynical and worldly.

The theme music for the soap opera fades down and under the dialogue.

In the soap opera, a beautiful young woman is talking to her mother, a very attractive older woman.

SOAP OPERA DIALOGUE

MELISSA

Mother, I've always felt like I could really talk to you. You've always been my best friend.

MOTHER

I'm glad you feel that way, dear.

MELISSA

Something's happened...

MOTHER

What is it, Melissa?

MELISSA

I don't suppose that it's any secret how I feel for Tad Nelson.

MOTHER

I thought you had resolved your feelings for Tad a long time ago.

MELISSA

I know but...

MOTHER

After all, when he found out that Vanessa wasn't killed in that avalanche after all but was suffering from amnesia and then was found by a hermit and nursed back to health, what did you expect him to do? Who would have thought that Tad would have happened across her on that skiing trip that the two of you took? Oh, Melissa, we've talked about this. Now that Vanessa has regained her memory and Tad has taken her back as his legal

wife, you've got to realize that there's simply no future for you and Tad. Melissa, honey, it's time for you to move on with your life.

MELISSA

Believe me, Mother, there is nothing I would like more than to simply move on with my life. But something has happened that I don't know how to deal with.

MOTHER

What could have possibly happened to bring up all these conflicts again?

MELISSA

When Tad and I were on that ski trip, before we found Vanessa, it was one of the most meaningful, special experiences of my life.

MOTHER

And that's something no one can ever take away from you, dear. But any thought of getting that back can only lead to despair.

MELISSA

Mother. That weekend. That beautiful, wonderful weekend...had it's consequences. Consequences I won't be able to ignore.

MOTHER

Darling, do you mean what I think you do?

MELISSA

Yes. Now can you see what I mean? So it's not resolved. It can never really be resolved.

MOTHER

What do you want to do?

MELISSA

I'm not sure. I only know that this is the result of one of the most meaningful experiences of my life and I...I...

She cries.

Melissa's mother holds her.

MOTHER

Now I want you to listen to me. This is going to be your decision, Melissa. But I want you to know that I'm going to support you in every way I can. If you want my help...If you need anything at all, I'll be there for you. Just as I have always been. I hope you know that.

MELISSA

Oh, Mother!

MOTHER

You're my only child. I understand how these things happen. I only want your happiness.

A handsome young man enters Melissa's room.

MOTHER

Tad!

TAD

Hello, Mrs. Cunningham. Melissa.

MELISSA

Hello, Tad.

TAD

I'm interrupting something. I'm sorry, I'll just...

MOTHER

No, Tad, that's alright. I was just leaving. Good-bye, Melissa. Take care.

MELISSA

Good-bye, Mother.

Melissa's mother exits.

TAD

I didn't mean to interrupt, really. I can't find my camera. I thought I might have left it here.

MELISSA

Yes, it's over here.

Melissa gets the camera.

TAD

How have you been?

MELISSA

Just fine.

TAD

I couldn't help but notice that there was something very heavy going down between you and your mom.

MELISSA

It's...nothing.

TAD

Melissa, I'm back with Vanessa now, sure, but you have to know that I can't just turn off my feelings for you. I still care for you deeply. You've got to know that.

MELISSA

Something's happened, Tad. I wasn't going to tell you. But I guess you, of all people, have a right to know.

TAD

What is it?

MELISSA

Tad, that time we had together in the mountains, before we found Vanessa, was the most meaningful time of my life. What we had opened me up. You have given me...myself...who I really am.

TAD

And you have meant everything to me. Going back to Vanessa was just the thing I had to do. I thought you knew that.

MELISSA

Of course I know that. And I respect you deeply for making the right decision. I would never expect a man like you to do anything else. That's what makes what I have to say all the more difficult.

TAD

Melissa, you can still tell me anything. I would do anything in the world for you.

MELISSA

Tad...I don't know how to say this.

TAD

Just come right out and say it.

MELISSA

Tad, I'm going to have your baby. I want you to know that I don't expect anything from you. You have your own life with Vanessa now, I know that. It's just that this baby represents the love we shared. It's a part of that memory...my memory. But I want you to believe me when I tell you that I don't want you to be concerned with anything. You're the father, of course. And that gives you unalienable rights. I want you to feel free to exercise whatever rights you want to. But I promise that no one will ever know that this is your child.

TAD

Now you listen to me. Vanessa went through quite an ordeal. She nearly died. We all thought that she had died. When I found her in that cave it was a shock. But I knew I had to do the right thing. But in another way, I was torn from you. We had something that I never had with Vanessa. If I had gone with my heart, I would have stayed with you. But Vanessa needed me. Just as you need me now. And our baby is going to need a father, a real father. One who can love and nurture it like a father should. I can't abandon you, Melissa. Not after all we've been through.

MELISSA

But what about Vanessa.

TAD

Vanessa is fully recovered now. She's strong. In many ways she's much stronger than you or I. I'm sure she'll understand...

Marty switches off the television with the remote control.

Hope looks at her with surprise.

MARTY

Don't make me barf.

Close-up on Hope.

The scene shifts back to "The Hidden Camera" scene when Hope was six years old. Allen continues to question Hope.

ALLEN

Tell me, Hope, what do you want to be when you grow up?

HOPE

A mommy.

ALLEN

A mommy, huh? You sound pretty sure of yourself.

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

What do mommies do, Hope?

HOPE

They take care of babies.

ALLEN

Oh, they take care of babies, do they? Does your mommy take care of babies?

HOPE

Just one baby.

ALLEN

Just one baby?

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

You have a baby at home?

Hope giggles and nods her head.

ALLEN

(Giggling with Hope) You do? Is it a boy baby or a girl baby?

HOPE

A boy baby.

The scene cuts back to the hospital with Hope as a sixteen year old. Marty is in her bed cooing to her baby.

The nurse enters.

NURSE

Well, Marty, it's time for that tiny boy to come back with us.

The nurse takes the baby from Marty.

MARTY

Good-bye, sugar plum.

NURSE

(To Hope) I'll bring your baby in for a feeding in just a minute. We're taking her out from under the lamp right now.

HOPE

Okay.

The nurse exits with Marty's baby.

MARTY

They had to put your baby under the lamp?

HOPE

Uh huh. It's okay though. She just had high numbers.

MARTY

Did she have that thing where she turns yellow?

HOPE

I don't know. It explains it here.

Hope picks up a fact sheet.

HOPE

(She mispronounces it) Jaundice.

MARTY

Yeah, that's it. The baby was born yellow and they had to put it under the lamp.

HOPE

She's alright, though. Her numbers were just a little high.

MARTY

They thought Ruth Ann was going to have to go under the lamp but she didn't.

HOPE

I thought you had a boy.

MARTY

This one here's a boy. My two year old's a girl.

HOPE

You have a two year old?

MARTY

Yeah, why?

HOPE

You look too young to have a two year old.

MARTY

Well, I'm not that young. I'm eighteen. My sister was having babies when she was thirteen.

HOPE

How old were you when you got married?

MARTY

I didn't never get married.

HOPE

Oh.

MARTY

Are you married?

HOPE

Not yet. I think we'll wait until we're done with school before we get married.

MARTY

You're going back to school?

HOPE

As soon as I can.

MARTY

Shoot. I had a baby so I didn't have to go back to school.

The scene shifts back to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

A boy baby! Wow! What's the boy baby's name?

HOPE

Bryan Scott Temple.

ALLEN

Bryan Scott Temple!

HOPE

His name is baby Scotty.

ALLEN

Baby Scotty. Tell me, Hope, do you get to help take care of baby Scotty?

Hope nods and giggles.

ALLEN

(Giggling with Hope) You do?

The scene cuts back to the hospital room.

Marty's mother and Marty's two year old daughter are seen entering the room, Marty's daughter is holding a brown paper bag, a book and an ice cream cone.

MOTHER

Give that bag to your mama, honey.

Marty's daughter gives her the brown paper bag.

MARTY

Ruth Ann, child, what are you doing with that ice cream cone?

MOTHER

It's alright. I got it for her.

MARTY

It's not alright, mama. Why did you give Ruth Ann an ice cream cone first thing in the morning for?

MOTHER

Don't snap at me, young lady. With the new baby, Ruth Ann needed something special.

MARTY

Mama, don't do this.

Marty's mother looks at Hope and smiles. She moves to the partition and draws it between the beds.

Marty and her mother continue to argue but the camera shots remain on Hope's side of the room.

MOTHER

Honey, it seems to me that you haven't been paying a whole lot of attention to Ruth Ann these past few months.

MARTY

I've been getting ready for the baby. And every time I look you're trying to keep Ruth Ann away from me. I don't got enough energy to fight you for her.

MOTHER

Somebody's got to take care of her.

MARTY

You keep acting like she's your baby. She's my baby, mama.

Ruth Ann comes around the partition to Hope's side of the room. She looks at Hope. Hope smiles at her. The argument continues throughout.

MOTHER

Just because you keep having babies don't mean you no expert at babies, little girl.

MARTY

Don't call me a little girl.

MOTHER

Well, don't keep thinking you're a big expert or something.

MARTY

What kind of mama am I going to be to my babies if you won't even let me take care of them?

MOTHER

Maybe if you took care of the baby you got before you went ahead and had another one, I could see it.

Ruth Ann walks up to Hope and shows her the children's book. The argument continues behind the partition simultaneously with the conversation between Hope and Ruth Ann.

MARTY

Mama, that's not fair!

MOTHER

How could you do it. when you knew how sick daddy got when you went ahead and got pregnant with Ruth Ann? You don't care for no one but yourself.

MARTY

I told you I wasn't going to talk to you about this again. Keep talking about daddy's illness like it was my fault or something!

MOTHER

Is Jimmie Ray going to help with this baby?

MARTY

Mama, I'm not going to talk about this again. I told you I wasn't going to talk to you about this. How can Jimmie Ray help when he don't have no job? He can't get work. He's out of the whole picture.

MOTHER

This is his baby, too! It don't do no good for him to pretend it aint. You can't just go on having babies and expecting your daddy and me to take care of them.

HOPE

Is that your book?

Ruth Ann nods.

HOPE

Can I see it?

Ruth Ann brings the book to Hope.

HOPE

Nursery rhymes? Do you like nursery rhymes?

Ruth Ann nods smiles and nods.

HOPE

Can I read to you?

Ruth Ann nods and climbs into the bed with Hope.

HOPE

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the kings horses and all the kings men, Couldn't put Humpty together again. That's an old nursery

MARTY

I don't expect you to take care of the kids at all.

MOTHER

And where do you suppose the money comes from to feed those babies?

MARTY

Money isn't everything.

MOTHER

Money aint everything when you never had to make none.

MARTY

When did you ever have to make money in your life, Mama?

The nurse enters the room with Hope's baby. Marty and her mother stop arguing when the nurse enters.

The nurse brings the baby to Hope.

HOPE

Is she alright?

NURSE

She's just fine.

HOPE

Is there something wrong with her eyes?

NURSE

Not at all.

rhyme. Do you like that one?

Ruth Ann shakes her head.

HOPE

It's not a very happy one, is it?

Ruth Ann gets down from the bed and sits on the chair.

HOPE

They're so pale.

NURSE

Oh, that's from the cotton we put over the baby's eyes while she's under the lamp. She'll be just fine.

Marty's mother looks around the partition.

MOTHER

Come on, Ruth Ann, we got to go.

Marty's mother takes Ruth Ann and they exit.

NURSE

So, do you think you'll be alright?

Hope nods her head.

NURSE

If you need anything, give me a ring.

HOPE

Okay.

The nurse exits.

Hope is feeding the baby.

Marty can be heard crying.

Hope fights back tears.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

Baby Scotty? Tell me, Hope. Do you get to help take care of baby Scotty?

Hope nods and giggles.

ALLEN

(Giggling with Hope) You do?

Hope nods.

ALLEN

Is your mommy a good mommy?

Hope smiles brightly and nods.

ALLEN

Are you going to be a good mommy just like your mommy?

Hope smiles brightly and nods vigorously.

ALLEN

You must really love your mommy.

Hope smiles sweetly.

HOPE

I love her very much.

ALLEN

I can tell that you do. Tell me, Hope. Is baby Scotty the first baby that you've ever taken care of?

Hope shakes her head.

ALLEN

What other babies have you taken care of?

HOPE

Moonflower.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

Hope is on the telephone.

HOPE

. . .Can you bring a toothbrush, too? I still haven't had a chance to brush my teeth. I'm so embarrassed. . . Mom? Did you call dad? . . That's okay. . . I know. . . I wouldn't feel right. . . I know he is. . . I know he does. . . I would still feel funny. . . I know, Mom. . . Mom, can you do me a favor? Could you bring me Moonflower? She's on my dresser. . . Up by the lamp. Make sure you're careful. . . I know you will but be sure that you don't put her in the bag with everything else. . . I know, just, please. . . Can you come right away? You can visit anytime you want. Please? I know. Bye.

Hope hangs up the phone.

Marty looks at her.

MARTY

You want to borrow my toothbrush?

HOPE

No. Thanks.

MARTY

Not that desperate yet, huh?

Hope smiles.

MARTY

Who's Moonflower?

HOPE

Oh. . . It's a doll I have.

MARTY

It's your doll?

HOPE

It's a china doll. My parents gave it to me when I was born.

MARTY

A china doll? It's got slanted eyes?

HOPE

No, it's made of china, I guess. It's very delicate. I've kept it like it was when I got it. My mother said that if I took good care of it that it would be worth a lot someday.

MARTY

It could bring in big bucks, eh?

HOPE

No, I mean it could be worth a lot because I took good care of it. It's kind of special to me. I don't know how to explain it.

MARTY

I know what you mean. My parents gave me a wagon when I was little. The only problem was that I let Tommy Lee Bruce play with it and he just let a bunch of his friends play in it and wreck the darn thing. That's probably the only thing I ever had that was really mine. The only reason I let Tommy Lee play with that wagon is because he promised he'd play with me if I did. I thought he was kind of cute back then. After the wagon got broke that was the last I seen of him. Well, I guess that's just the way kids are.

Silence.

MARTY

So you're going back to school?

HOPE

I guess so.

MARTY

I'm going to take a test so I can get a high school diploma. You know, you don't actually have to go to high school. You can take a test and when you pass it you can go right on to college.

HOPE

You want to go to college?

MARTY

Not really. But if you want to be a nurse you have to go to college.

HOPE

Oh.

MARTY

Are you going to college?

HOPE

I don't think so.

MARTY

You can't do anything if you don't get a college education. What do you want to do when you finish high school?

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

Tell me, Hope. What do you want to be when you grow up?

HOPE

A mommy.

ALLEN

A mommy, huh? You sound pretty sure of yourself.

Hope nods her head.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

HOPE

I don't know. I guess I never really thought about it.

MARTY

That's the way I was before I had Ruth Ann. It's kind of the worst thing and the best thing that ever happened to me, getting pregnant and having Ruth Ann. Right after I got pregnant, Ruth Ann's daddy went into the army. I only seen him twice since Ruth Ann was born. I done real good taking care of Ruth Ann all by myself. And I always wanted to be a nurse since I was a little girl. Having Ruth Ann kind of gave me a direction to go. I sure didn't have no direction before Ruth Ann was born.

Silence.

HOPE

What's your new baby's name?

MARTY

Tommy. I named him after my "first love." What's your baby's name?

HOPE

Margaret Fuller Temple.

MARTY

My name's Margaret. Everybody calls me Marty but my real name's Margaret.

HOPE

It's my mother's name.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

Is your mommy a good mommy?

Hope smiles brightly and nods.

ALLEN

You must really love your mommy.

Hope smiles sweetly.

HOPE

I love her very much.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

Hope is sitting up in bed, absently staring at the nursery rhyme book that Ruth Ann left behind.

Marty's bed is empty.

Hope's mother enters with a paper bag.

MOTHER

Hope?

HOPE

Hi, Mom.

MOTHER

Hi, honey. Here's the things you wanted.

She takes out a toothbrush.

MOTHER

One toothbrush.

She takes out the china doll.

And here's Moonflower.

HOPE

Mom, I didn't want you to put her in the bag.

MOTHER

She was safer in the bag, dear.

HOPE

You're probably right.

Silence.

HOPE

Why didn't you come this morning?

MOTHER

I had so much to do.

HOPE

Why didn't Scotty come?

MOTHER

He's at ball practice.

HOPE

Oh, yeah.

Silence.

HOPE

Do you think he's mad at me?

MOTHER

He's an eleven year old boy. Who knows what he's thinking?

Silence.

MOTHER

How are you feeling?

HOPE

Real tired.

MOTHER

That's natural. You'll feel better in a couple of days.

Silence.

MOTHER

Your Aunt Rita's in the hospital.

HOPE

What's she in the hospital for?

MOTHER

It's nothing serious. The doctor's said she's fatigued. They think it might have something to do with her new medicine.

HOPE

Will she be alright?

MOTHER

Oh, sure. You don't have to worry. It might be nice if you could get a card to her. I'll bring one for you tomorrow.

HOPE

Tomorrow?

Silence.

MOTHER

It looks like Mike is going to get that scholarship to the University of Kentucky.

HOPE

Did you see the baby?

MOTHER

I saw her before I came in. Scotty's music teacher thinks that he's going to be in the junior top hat choir next year. I always thought that he had a good singing voice.

HOPE

Have you heard anything about All-State Choir?

MOTHER

I haven't heard. I'm sure they miss you though.

HOPE

Mary Beth's as good as I am.

MOTHER

I don't know about that.

HOPE

No one can sing as good as you.

Silence.

HOPE

Mom. . .

MOTHER

Your voice is much stronger than Mary Beth's.

HOPE

Mom, did you get a chance to call dad yet?

MOTHER

Honey, I can't call your father.

HOPE

I know, but. . .

MOTHER

Why don't you call him, Hope? He'd really want to hear from you. I can't explain it to you. You'll understand these things better when you grow up.

Silence.

HOPE

I haven't been feeling well.

MOTHER

I've been feeling a little upset myself in the afternoons. It always seems to go away by bedtime.

HOPE

Are you mad at me?

MOTHER

Hope. . .

HOPE

If you're mad at me, Mom, I don't know what I'm going to do.

MOTHER

I'm not mad at you, Hope

The nurse enters with Hope's baby.

NURSE

Time to feed baby. Is this Margaret's grandmother?

This is the first time that Hope's mother has been called "grandmother."

MOTHER

Yes. Here let me get out of your way.

HOPE

Don't go, Mom.

MOTHER

I'm not going. I just don't want to be in the way.

NURSE

There's a robe on the dresser if you want to hold the baby.

MOTHER

No, that's alright.

HOPE

Why don't you feed her?

MOTHER

You go ahead, Hope. I'll sit right over here.

The nurse finishes helping Hope with the baby, then exits.

HOPE

Don't you want to hold the baby?

MOTHER

I'm sure I'll get plenty of chances to hold the baby. It's not that I don't want to hold her. . . Oh, here. I brought school work for you to do. There's only three weeks left so you'll have to do most of your work at home. But I talked to most of your teachers and it looks like you'll be able to finish this year without having to go to summer school.

Hope's mother begins to take out books and paper and sits them on the dresser next to Moonflower.

MOTHER

(Laying Moonflower on the bed next to Hope and the baby) Here, you better keep Moonflower with you while I get these things organized.

HOPE

Thanks for bringing her. I know I'm too big for dolls but she's real special to me.

MOTHER

She's special to me, too. You're special to me. Well, here's your algebra assignments. You should probably work on these right away. You know how you are in algebra. Here's your English assignments and your social studies. Your art teacher said you'd be able to catch up when you got back. I'll try to see the rest of your teachers tomorrow.

HOPE

I know it must be kind of embarrassing for you to have to talk to all my teachers.

MOTHER

It's important for you to finish school, Hope.

HOPE

I will.

Marty enters the room.

MARTY

I feel like a shot possum walking around these halls.

Marty sees Hope's mother.

MARTY

Hi.

MOTHER

Hello.

Hope's mother looks at her watch.

MOTHER

I better go pick up Scotty.

HOPE

You didn't get a chance to hold baby Margaret.

MOTHER

Maybe next time. I can't be late or Scotty will try to walk home again.

HOPE

Come back tonight. And bring Scotty if he wants to come.

MOTHER

We'll see. Don't look so sad.

Hope's mother kisses her.

HOPE

Come back.

MOTHER

We'll see.

HOPE

You don't think Scotty's ashamed of me do you?

MOTHER

No, I don't think so. I'll be back later.

Hope's mother exits.

Hope picks up Moonflower.

MARTY

That your Mom?

Hope nods.

MARTY

She's pretty.

Hope stares.

MARTY

Is that the Chinese doll you were talking about?

HOPE

China doll.

Hope turns the doll toward Marty so she can see it.

MARTY

Real pretty. Mind if I hold her?

HOPE

I'll show you after I'm done feeding the baby.

MARTY

I didn't want to. . .

HOPE

No, it's alright. I'm just kind of funny about her. You know?

MARTY

Yeah, I know.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

You must really love your Mommy.

Hope smiles sweetly.

HOPE

I love her very much.

ALLEN

I can tell that you do. Tell me, Hope. Is baby Scotty the first baby you've ever taken care of?

Hope shakes her head.

ALLEN

What other babies have you taken care of?

HOPE

Moonflower.

ALLEN

Moonflower did you say?

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

Who is Moonflower?

HOPE

She's my baby.

ALLEN

Your baby? You mean you have your very own baby?

Hope nods.

ALLEN

How did you get your baby, Hope?

HOPE

I got it when I was born.

ALLEN

You got a baby when you were born?

Hope nods.

ALLEN

How did you get a baby when you were born?

HOPE

My Mommy and Daddy gave it to me.

ALLEN

Oh, I see. It's your baby doll.

HOPE

But she's my baby. I taked care of her so she's very special. My Mommy said that I'll be a very good mommy someday.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

Marty's mother is sitting next to Marty's bed. They are laughing. Hope is doing school work.

MOTHER

(Still laughing) . . .And that Hargis boy thought Roger was still in there so he went on home.

Marty and her mother laugh hysterically. Hope looks at them and smiles.

MOTHER

I told Mrs. Hargis that I was a mamaw for the sixth time and she was real surprised. She said I looked way too young to be a grandmother.

MARTY

You don't look too young to be a grandmother.

MOTHER

Thank you very much for saying that.

They laugh.

MOTHER

Well, I got to go pick up daddy from work. I probably won't get back tonight.

MARTY

Mama, I need you to do me a favor.

MOTHER

Now what is it?

MARTY

Don't talk like that, Mama. This is real important.

MOTHER

Alright.

MARTY

I been thinking that I maybe want to go to college and learn to be a nurse.

MOTHER

Why do you want to be a nurse?

MARTY

Because.

MOTHER

You didn't even finish high school. You have to go on through high school and then to college before you can be a nurse.

MARTY

But I didn't have to go back to finish high school. You can take a test and they let you skip high school and go right on to college.

MOTHER

You can't just take a test to get out of going to high school.

MARTY

Yes, you can. Sissy Hatfield got into a program up to the community college and they helped her get ready and she took that test and went right on to college.

MOTHER

Where did you hear a thing like that?

MARTY

I'm going to do it, Mama.

MOTHER

What on earth do you want to be a nurse for?

MARTY

I want to help people.

MOTHER

Why do you want to help other people when you can't even take care of your own?

MARTY

I take care of my own just fine.

MOTHER

We can't afford to sent you to no college.

MARTY

It don't cost that much to go up to the community college. That's the favor I wanted to ask you. I was hoping you could ask daddy to get me the money to go there.

MOTHER

We can't afford it.

MARTY

It don't cost that much.

MOTHER

I don't have to ask Daddy because I know what he's going to say.

MARTY

Just ask him for me.

MOTHER

How are you going to college when you got two babies to take care of?

MARTY

You could watch them when I go to my nursing classes.

MOTHER

Oh, no you don't. You can't run off to school and leave those babies for me to raise. I already raised my kids.

MARTY

I don't want you to raise them. I just need you to watch them when I go to school.

MOTHER

You're not going to school, Marty.

MARTY

I am too.

MOTHER

No, Marty.

MARTY

You're just jealous.

MOTHER

Jealous?

MARTY

You just don't want to see any of us kids get better than you. Both you and Daddy. That's why Billy went into the army. To get away from you guys. Now he's running his own store up to Dayton and you guys won't even talk to him no more.

MOTHER

Billy won't talk to us. Don't go blaming that on Daddy and me.

MARTY

You just hate us kids.

MOTHER

We don't hate you. We just don't want you to get hurt. Now Marty, stop thinking about going to college. It won't do you no good. I think it's real nice that you want to be a nurse and help people but you have enough to keep you busy raising those babies of yours. Maybe after they're grown up you can get one of their daddies to do right by you and help you go to nursing school. You just better not think about it until then.

Silence.

MOTHER

I got to go. I'll be late picking up your daddy.

She kisses Marty.

MOTHER

Let's just think about taking good care of those babies, alright?

Marty looks away.

Marty's mother looks at her for a second. She begins to say something but then leaves.

MARTY

I ain't never going to be a nurse. I'm just going to end up being like my mama.

HOPE

Maybe you can go to school when your kids are grown up.

MARTY

When my kids are grown up? I'll have to wait until Tommy's eighteen. What year will it be in eighteen years?

Silence as Hope figures it.

HOPE

Two thousand and eight.

MARTY

The year two thousand and eight? How old will I be?

HOPE

You're eighteen?

Marty nods as tears come to her eyes.

Silence as Hope figures it.

HOPE

Thirty-six.

MARTY

I'll be taking care of babies until I'm almost forty years old. With no daddy to help me. All I ever wanted to be was a nurse. Now I can't never be one.

Marty cries.

Marty wipes away her tears.

HOPE

You remember when you asked me what I wanted to do?

MARTY

Yeah.

HOPE

It made me think about what I really wanted to be. I remember when we lived in Lexington. I got on a show called, "Hidden Camera." It was like "Candid Camera" only it was on a local station. I was only in the first or second grade at the time. I remember they took us into this empty classroom one at a time to talk to the shows host. He asked a lot of questions but I didn't even think about how I answered them. After he talked to us this lady told us that we were going to be on T.V. It finally came on a couple of months later. I remember seeing myself and hearing myself on the television set but I didn't remember saying any of those things. I thought someone else must have said them. I'm not making any sense, am I?

MARTY

Not really.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

What's that, honey?

HOPE

I said, Hope!

ALLEN

Oh! You said Hope!

HOPE

Yes!

ALLEN

Hope. That's a pretty name. A pretty name for a pretty girl.

HOPE

You're starting to embarrass me again.

ALLEN

Oh, no. I won't embarrass you.

HOPE

Good.

ALLEN

Tell me, Hope. What do you want to be when you grow up?

The scene shifts back to the hospital.

HOPE

Anyway, I remembered the man asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

Tell me, Hope. What do you want to be when you grow up?

HOPE

A mommy.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

MARTY

What did you say?

HOPE

I remember hearing myself say that I wanted to be a mommy.

ALLEN

A mommy, huh? You sound pretty sure of yourself.

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

What do mommies do, Hope?

The scene shifts to the hospital.

MARTY

Well, you're a mommy alright. What are you going to do now?

HOPE

(Through tears) I don't know.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

What other babies have you taken care of?

HOPE

Moonflower.

ALLEN

Moonflower did you say?

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

Who is Moonflower.

HOPE

She's my baby.

ALLEN

Your baby? You mean you have your own baby?

Hope nods.

ALLEN

How did you get a baby, Hope?

The scene shifts to the hospital.

Both Hope and Marty are crying.

MARTY

Bless our hearts, we,re a mess.

Marty and Hope are both laughing and crying.

MARTY

You'll be okay. At least your baby is going to have a daddy. My babies'll probably never have a real daddy.

HOPE

Why not?

MARTY

Because I probably won't never get married.

HOPE

Why?

MARTY

I don't want to.

HOPE

You don't want to get married?

MARTY

If I got married I'd probably end up like my mama. That's one of the reasons I wanted to be a nurse. So I could make some money and take care of the kids by myself. My folks aren't happy. All they do is fight and blame us kids for making their life miserable. I'm never going to do that to my kids. All I ever wanted was for my folks to love each other. Maybe then everything would be okay. Then maybe they'd love me. That's another reason I had babies. At least I got someone I can love. I got someone who loves me.

They begin to cry.

MARTY

Lord have mercy, here we go again.

They laugh and cry.

The scene shifts to "Hidden Camera."

ALLEN

How did you get your baby, Hope?

HOPE

I got it when I was born.

ALLEN

You got a baby when you where born?

Hope nods.

ALLEN

How did you get a baby when you were born?

HOPE

My mommy and daddy gave it to me.

ALLEN

Oh, I see. It's your baby doll.

HOPE

But she's my baby. I taked care of her so she's very special. My mommy said that I'll be a very good mommy someday.

ALLEN

Maybe she lets you help take care of baby Scotty because you take such good care of your own baby.

Hope nods.

ALLEN

Now tell me, Hope. And tell me the truth. Does daddy help take care of the baby?

Hope wrinkles her nose and shakes her head.

ALLEN

He doesn't?

HOPE

He's too busy.

ALLEN

He's too busy, huh?

Hope nods her head.

ALLEN

What's he busy doing?

HOPE

He does his work.

ALLEN

When you grow up and have your own babies is your husband going to help you take care of them.

Hope wrinkles up her nose and shakes her head.

ALLEN

Why not?

HOPE

I'm not going to get a husband.

ALLEN

(Laughs) I don't know how to break the news to you, Hope but I think when you grow up you'll find that you have to get a husband before you can have a baby.

HOPE

No way.

ALLEN

But let me tell you this, Hope. I know this might embarrass you but I'll bet a girl as pretty as you won't have any trouble finding a good daddy for your babies. Did I embarrass you too bad?

Hope shakes her head.

ALLEN

Hope, can you do me a favor?

HOPE

What?

ALLEN

We have a hidden camera over there behind that flag and we're going to show this little talk we had together to a bunch of people. Is that alright with you?

Hope shrugs her shoulders.

ALLEN

Can you give one of your prettiest smiles and wave to the people over there?

Hope smiles and puts her hands over her face. She then coyly looks through her hands and waves at the camera.

The audience reaction to her is an admirable "awwwwww." Then there is an applause which builds.

The scene shifts to the hospital.

Marty is asleep.

Hope is looking at Moonflower.

Kenny appears in the doorway. He looks in the doorway. He takes a few steps into the room.

KENNY

Hi.

HOPE

Kenny. Hi. Come in, sit down.

Kenny sits in the chair next to Hope's bed.

HOPE

Did you see the baby?

KENNY

Yeah. She's so little. And wrinkled.

HOPE

She's alright.

KENNY

You named her Margaret.

HOPE

Is that okay?

KENNY

Sure.

Silence.

HOPE

Do your parents know you came?

KENNY

Are you kidding. They sent me to pick up my sister at the library. It doesn't close for another twenty minutes so I thought I'd stop and see you.

HOPE

I'm glad you came.

KENNY

Is anyone else coming to see you tonight?

HOPE

Like who?

KENNY

I just don't want your mom to come in here and see me.

HOPE

I don't think she'd mind.

KENNY

Yeah, but if it got back to my parents. . . You know how they feel about us seeing each other.

HOPE

I don't think she'll come back tonight.

Silence.

HOPE

How long do you think your parents won't let you see me?

KENNY

I don't think they ever want us to see each other.

HOPE

Well, that's not fair. Now that the baby's born we have to see each other. It's your baby, too.

KENNY

That's not the way they see it.

HOPE

I can't wait until I'm eighteen. They can't stop us then.

Silence.

KENNY

I didn't bring you anything.

HOPE

That's okay.

KENNY

I'll get you something when you get out.

Silence.

KENNY

Did any of the kids from school come up to see you?

HOPE

No.

KENNY

None of them?

Hope shakes her head.

KENNY

Not even Pam?

HOPE

Pam hasn't had anything to do with me ever since I got pregnant.

KENNY

I can't believe people.

Silence.

KENNY

(Looking at Hope) I don't believe it.

HOPE

What?

KENNY

You mean you finally let that China doll off it's throne?

HOPE

Mom brought it to me this afternoon.

KENNY

I never thought I'd see the day.

He reaches out to take it from her.

She resists.

He lets go with a mildly surprised expression.

HOPE

Oh, here.

She gives Kenny the doll.

He looks at it.

HOPE

Did you get a chance to hold the baby yet?

KENNY

No.

HOPE

I want you to just hold her when they bring her in.

KENNY

Oh, I don't know, Hope.

HOPE

Don't you want to hold her?

KENNY

I'll hold her. It's no big deal.

Silence.

I'd better go.

HOPE

Is something wrong?

KENNY

No.

HOPE

You don't have to hold her if you don't want to.

Marty begins to stir in her bed.

KENNY

It's not that. . .

HOPE

What?

Kenny pulls the partition between the two beds.

KENNY

Hope, I think I'm going out to stay with my brother in Arizona after school gets out.

HOPE

For the whole summer?

KENNY

I'll probably go ahead and finish my senior year out there.

HOPE

Why?

KENNY

There's too much pressure here. My parents and everything.

HOPE

But Margaret and I have to stay here.

KENNY

Yeah. I guess you probably do.

HOPE

Why do you have to go now?

KENNY

I don't know. Maybe my parents are right. It might be better for the baby and everyone if we didn't see each other for a while.

HOPE

But I have to stay here with the baby for at least two more years. When will we see you?

KENNY

I don't know.

HOPE

Will you come back and see us before then?

KENNY

I don't know.

HOPE

Margaret's going to need you, too. You're her father.

KENNY

Oh, come on, Hope. What kind of father can I be? Let's face it. I still have another year of school left. And I haven't got the slightest idea what I'm going to do when I get out.

HOPE

She needs you here to love her.

KENNY

I can't do it, Hope. Can't you see? Everything's too much.

HOPE

But we can't get legally married for two more years. I don't want to wait that long to be with you. Margaret will be two years old by then.

KENNY

You don't know. We might decide not to get married.

HOPE

We have to get married, Kenny. I had a baby.

KENNY

That doesn't mean we have to get married.

HOPE

You said we were going to get married, Kenny. You promised. You told me you loved me that night. The only reason I let you is because you said we were going to get married.

KENNY

You know what I meant.

HOPE

You promised me.

KENNY

I didn't think you were going to have a baby.

HOPE

But I did have one. You don't realize what its been like for the past nine months. None of my friends had anything to do with me. Your parents wouldn't let you come near me. All the boys at school treated me like I was dirty. My mother probably won't ever look at me the same again. And no one even wants to hold the baby.

KENNY

Get off my back, will you. Why is everyone on me? You're not the only one who's had a hard time, you know. My parents have spent the last few months trying to find a way to get rid of me so they won't have a major embarrassment for a son. All the kids at school treat me like I'm some bad joke. I just have to get out of here. Don't you understand? I'm just sick of it!

Kenny hurls Moonflower across the room.

She floats through the air in slow motion.

She smashes against the wall.

Close-up on Hope.

KENNY

Oh, Hope. Hope, I'm sorry. You know I didn't do that on purpose.

Hope gets out of bed and picks up the pieces of the China doll.

KENNY

Is it broke bad? Really, Hope. I didn't do it on purpose.

HOPE

I know you didn't.

KENNY

I have to go. I got to pick up my sister.

Hope cries.

KENNY

I'm really sorry, Hope.

HOPE

Are you coming back?

KENNY

Yeah, maybe I'll come back.

Kenny exits.

Hope is crying.

Marty pulls back the partition.

MARTY

Are you alright?

HOPE

Could you bring me the glue out of that bag over there?

Marty brings the glue to Hope.

Hope tries to glue the pieces together but they stick to her fingers and fall to the floor.

MARTY

Do you need some help?

Hope drops the doll and the bottle of glue.

She sinks to the floor and sobs.

Marty puts her arms around Hope.

The following dialogue from the "Hidden Camera" scene can be heard while the image of Marty with her arms around Hope remains until the end.

ALLEN

Hope, can you do me a favor?

HOPE

What?

ALLEN

We have a hidden camera behind that flag over there and we're going to show this little talk we had together to a bunch of people. Is that alright with you? (pause) Can you give one of your prettiest smiles and wave good-bye to the people over there?

The audience reaction is heard. The applause is heard.

The image of Marty and Hope fade out.

END